

REMARKS

Entry of the foregoing and reconsideration of the application identified in caption, as amended, pursuant to and consistent with 37 C.F.R. §1.116 and in light of the remarks which follow, are respectfully requested.

Applicants note with appreciation the indication that claims 1, 3, 5-9 and 11-19 are allowed, and that claim 21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form (Official Action at pages 3 and 4).

By the above amendments, claim 21 has been canceled and the features thereof have been incorporated into claim 20. Entry of such amendments is proper at least because they place the application in condition for allowance. See M.P.E.P. §714.12.

In the Official Action, claim 20 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being obvious over U.S. Patent No. 6,488,838 (*Tonkovich et al*). Without addressing the propriety of the Examiner's comments concerning this rejection, claim 20 has been amended to incorporate the features of claim 21 which depends from claim 20. In this regard, the Patent Office has indicated that claim 21 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Accordingly, the §103(a) rejection of claim 20 is moot and for at least this reason, withdrawal of such §103(a) rejection is respectfully requested.

From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is believed to be next in order, and such action is earnestly solicited.

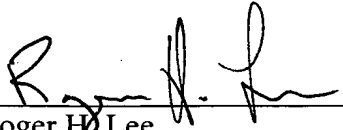
If there are any questions concerning this paper or the application in general, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

Date: December 13, 2004

By: _____


Roger H. Lee
Registration No. 46,317

P.O. Box 1404
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404
(703) 836-6620